

University Park Campus School

Innovation Prospectus

Principal: Ricci Hall

December 15, 2010

(i) Whether the school will be a new school or a conversion school:

University Park Campus School (UPCS) as an Innovation school will follow the conversion school model.

(ii) If the school is a new school, the proposed location of the school: N/A

(iii) If the school is a conversion of an existing school, the school that is being proposed for conversion:

University Park Campus School will retain its name and current location under this conversion process.

(iv) The external partners, if any, that will be involved in the school:

UPCS will have a key partner in fulfilling the mission of the school: Clark University. While Clark's role in the partnership will not be to have direct authority for the operation of the school, Clark's relationship with UPCS has been and will continue to be critical to our success. As in the past, Clark commits to supporting the school with several in-kind services such as use of the athletic complex, library and other college facilities. In addition, UPCS students who qualify are allowed, at no cost, to take college courses in their junior and senior years. In return, UPCS will continue to provide a training ground for graduate and undergraduate students who are working on their degrees at the University. We will work closely with the Jacob Hiatt Center for Urban Education and the Education Department at Clark to ensure high quality experiences for pre-service teachers. UPCS teachers will have professional development opportunities and will work closely with department personnel to assist with the creation and implementation of curriculum and assessment practices, and Clark professors will continue to teach special seminar classes at UPCS to students focusing on college readiness.

The recent work that Clark has done around The Promise Neighborhood Program will place UPCS and its resources at the center of an effort to transform our neighborhood. UPCS is committed to working in this partnership to help carry out the mission of "cradle to college" for all youngsters living in our neighborhood. UPCS is committed to playing a role in the Promised Neighborhood Advisory Council, working in tandem with other promise neighborhood schools, and working in the Learning Network of Innovation Schools to provide a first class educational opportunity for all children within our neighborhood.

(v) The number of students the school is anticipated to serve and the number of staff expected to be employed at the school:

UPCS will serve approximately 240 students in grades 7 through 12. Students who are accepted by lottery to the school must prove residency within the defined University Park Neighborhood. There will be 25 professional staff including one principal and one assistant principal. There will be two custodians, two administrative assistants, and two members of the nutritional staff.

(vi) The overall vision for the school, including improving school performance and student achievement:

The mission of UPCS promises that all students will be college, career and citizenship ready. There are no college tracks for certain students only. Instead all students take a challenging, all honors curriculum that will ensure they have met the requirements for college acceptance including four years of English, 4 years of math, 4 years of science, 4 years of a social science, 3 years of a World Language, and all seniors take Senior Seminar, a course meant to help students through the college application, financial aid, and acceptance process. Our mission and vision are palpable in all we do; every student knows that coming to UPCS means preparing for a college education. Moreover, the vision of our school creates the opportunity for our community to regularly reflect on our progress toward the achievement of these high ideals. In terms of improvement, UPCS is committed to continuing its work toward college readiness for all. We will ensure that all graduates of UPCS can take, at least, the entry level college courses without the need for remedial coursework, and we will strive to reach 100% college persistence rates to graduate within a six year window.

(vii) Specific needs or challenges the school will be designed to address:

The persistence demographic patterns are that students from poverty and students of color do not matriculate to college with the same frequency as their peers. For the few who enroll in college, even smaller numbers persevere to receive a degree. For example, the Pell Institute Report from 2005 found that only 31% of low-income 18-24 year olds enroll in college nationally. Of this number only 6% graduate within six years. UPCS exists to change these circumstances. Our current enrollment and persistence numbers are much better than this (92%). Yet our work as a school will not be done until all students, 100% of them, are able to graduate with the skills necessary to enroll in and graduate from college.

(viii) A preliminary assessment of the autonomy and flexibility that the school will seek:

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Curriculum

UPCS will use and follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) and the Common Core in all subject areas. Each teacher will create a consistent curriculum map that is clearly connected to the MCF and that has essential learning questions, common assessments, and portfolio assignments to prove acquisition of school wide and department learning expectations. Teams of teachers will ensure opportunities, where they make sense, for cross curricular connections so that learning in one discipline does not become isolated from learning in others. Curriculum will focus on discovery of key concepts and ensure that students are at the center of the learning experience in the classroom.

Instruction

UPCS has developed and will use six key instructional strategies: collaborative group work, writing to learn, literacy groups, scaffolding, questioning, and classroom talk. All of these strategies are based on research (see Appendix G) and integrated in very successful classrooms. Each of these strategies share the importance of students being at the center of the learning focus of the classroom. Instruction at UPCS has students asking questions and working collaboratively and teachers facilitating and supporting the learning of complex and rigorous material. This instructional approach connects and aligns with our school's mission to create college-ready students. Because students are required to practice college-level skills, instruction of this depth will ensure that students have the key cognitive abilities necessary to be successful in college and careers.

Students and faculty members will be organized into teams within specific grades. Each grade will have the same five major teachers who will collaborate to ensure all students are getting the needed instruction and support for success. The standard teacher load will be about 90 students. Moreover, in this structure, teams of teachers will have scheduled meeting times so that they can better serve their students and respond to all of their needs. Class times will be created to maximize learning. No class will be less than one hour and other classes will be longer (particularly ELA and Math classes).

UPCS will have a full inclusion, heterogeneous grouping model. There will be pull-out services for special education students, and teachers will be completing all four SEI categories for ELL support. Due to our instructional strategies, ELL and special education students will have access to the all-honors curriculum with critical support from their teachers.

Assessment

In addition to the MCAS and every day classroom assessments, student success will be measured in many ways. First, students will be assessed on MAP at least twice a year. Second, each year students in grades 8, 10, and 12 will complete Gateway performances to prove to the school community and parents that they have achieved the school-wide expectations for student learning; seniors will need to assert their readiness for college and graduation. These Gateway performances will be assessed by teachers, students, and the community. Using a rubric, teachers will also give feedback to each student twice a year about their progress toward meeting each of the school's expectations, and students will evaluate themselves and their progress through self-analysis and reflection.

Staffing

UPCS will function as an Innovation school with the autonomy to hire staff both from within the system and from outside without the constraints of the current bidding process. As part of the Innovation Plan, we anticipate creating a comprehensive process by which teachers, parents, students, and the principal will play a role in interviewing and choosing highly-qualified individuals to fill staff vacancies at the school. This process will be followed for any staff opening including but not limited to: principal, assistant principal, teacher, administrative assistant, custodian, student support staff, etc.

Professional Development

As part of UPCS's Innovation School plan, we intend to closely follow the school's comprehensive professional development plan created by the teachers based upon their needs and desires for growth. Moreover, since there is a great deal of capacity already built within the staff at UPCS, we will use this expertise to support the school's mission, vision, focus, and instructional strategies. Potential areas of future professional development include: the use of technology in the classroom, instructional methods, common assessments and rubrics for evaluating school expectations, student portfolio use, and college readiness study skills backward mapped from grade 12 to grade 7. While all of these will remain a focus of our work, we will also revisit these priorities regularly to ensure that all PD is relevant, useful, and improving student learning and outcomes.

Budget

As part of our proposal, UPCS will seek 25 full time professional staff and 6 support staff members (see Appendix F). We will use the same budget numbers used by the district for instructional materials and building requirements (gas, electricity, phone, trash, etc.) This operationally will create a budget that has a per pupil expenditure of \$8500.00.

(ix) Why the flexibility described is desirable to carry out the objectives of the school:

UPCS has historically placed a great deal of emphasis on instruction and instructional personnel. Under our Innovation proposal, these priorities will still drive our work with students. All of these proposed autonomies will allow the school, driven by the teachers, to create the best learning environment and culture for the students. With our autonomy in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the true experts, the teachers, will have the power and the responsibility to make sure every student is succeeding and moving toward college readiness. As a small school, the people who work at our school must understand our instructional philosophy and agree with the student-centered approach with high expectations for all. Teachers must know that teaching at UPCS means working tirelessly inside and outside of the classroom to ensure that the needs of the students are met in a heterogeneous, full inclusion model.

Granting us staffing autonomy will ensure that we, the school community, can find the right match for staff openings. As is apparent in the school's administrative structure and staff configuration, there is a high degree of importance placed on teaching. Currently, there is only one administrator for the entire school. In addition, we have added a full time college and alumni support coordinator who will be responsible for working with upper classmen to make sure they are college ready and with our alums to assist them in navigating college to ensure their success and acquisition of a college degree. As this is at the heart of our mission, this position is critical. Other positions, like the literacy position, ensure that all students are ready to access an all honors, rigorous high school curriculum in preparation for college success. We have historically been challenged with students' low math abilities. Our staffing in math demonstrates a clear commitment to improvement in this area.

Our autonomy in the area of professional development is also rooted in the mission and vision of the school. We recognize that no one better understands the needs of our school and our students than the professional staff in the school. We have worked hard in the past and will continue to do so by building capacity and expertise in our teachers and valuing what they do well every day. Moreover, we also know our strengths and struggles; we will continue to assess our own needs and craft professional development that is meaningful to the work of our school's mission. Finally, in the area of budget, we feel that our staffing and budget commitments fall perfectly in line with our philosophy and track

record. Having control over who we hire and how many positions we have represents the best opportunity for our school to live out its mission in the everyday functioning of the school. Having the resources to sustain an afterschool and summer program would also allow us to offer our students the time they need to develop academically, socially and civically to achieve college-readiness and attain their goals.

(x) Anticipated components of the school's innovation plan

Learning Culture and Practice: Aligned Curriculum

The curriculum of UPCS is innovative as it utilizes a variety of sources and is adapted appropriately so it is accessible to students of all backgrounds and abilities. It is aligned with the Massachusetts Frameworks, as shown in the curriculum maps (see Appendix E) and in our MCAS performance data. The ELA Common Core Anchor Standards emphasize reading, writing, speaking and listening, and standards for language. At UPCS, we practice Literacy Across the Curriculum. Students read, write, and communicate in all subjects on a daily basis. The Mathematics Common Core Practice Standards are actualized as students make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, appropriately use models and tools, attend to precision, and look for patterns in all math classes, but also within the other disciplines.

Looping is deliberately put in place at the middle school level where students need the most structure and guidance. It also occurs to some degree in the high school as a necessity due to our small size. The practice of looping, as well as full day workshops, Wednesday morning meetings, and informal discussions will be utilized to continue to ensure vertical alignment. The curriculum is horizontally aligned, as there is one teacher per discipline per grade, and teachers of the same students collaborate to make interdisciplinary connections when appropriate.

University Park Campus School has historically struggled with providing adequate technology so that students develop certain 21st century skills. Students are trained to be inventive thinkers, problem solvers, communicators, culturally and globally aware citizens, valuable team members, and workers who see a challenge as an opportunity. However, the lack of current and dependable technology at UPCS does limit our ability to prepare students with *all* digital age proficiencies. Although creative problem solving and utilization of Clark University's courses and library resources has helped to address this need, Innovation School autonomies would allow us to focus on improvements in this area.

The inclusion model at UPCS communicates high expectations for all students, regardless of academic ability or background. Every student is enrolled in an honors curriculum. Teachers work tirelessly to support each student in completing rigorous course material. Although special education and English language learners may struggle during their middle school years, by the 10th grade, they have acquired the skills and concepts necessary for success. Our instruction supports all learners and addresses the diverse set of student needs.

Effective Instruction

All students can think; therefore, all students can learn in every subject. This attitude is the basis for all instruction at UPCS. Any tour of our building would reveal that teachers are seldom at the board lecturing. Instead, in honors classes designed to challenge and to support all learners, teachers constantly question and develop engaging lessons that empower all students to act as mathematicians, historians, researchers, scientists, etc. The students themselves, through a hands-on, minds-on, collaborative approach, uncover new knowledge and understandings, thus, truly learning and taking ownership of their own ideas. They become confident thinkers and problem solvers.

As evidenced by the “High Quality Teaching and Learning” document created and adopted by the faculty at UPCS (see Appendix B), teacher thoughts and actions are critical to upholding the positive culture and climate of UPCS. This is why we seek the autonomy of staffing Innovations Schools provide.

To support the student-centered teaching and learning and to ensure that all students are accessing an honors curriculum, we have a common instructional framework. The common instructional framework, based on the idea that students need to be constantly interacting with rigorous material, consists of six instructional strategies. These six strategies, strongly supported by research (see Appendix G), are collaborative group work, writing to learn, questioning, scaffolding, classroom talk, and literacy groups. Upon walking through the classrooms and halls at UPCS, you may see students writing “Dear Confundido” letters in Spanish class to explain how to conjugate a new verb tense (writing to learn), in groups problem solving vocabulary and content-rich puzzles in math class (collaborative group work), engaging in a Socratic seminar in English class to discuss the growth of a literary figure (classroom talk), analyzing historical pictures and primary source documents to understand events of the past (scaffolding), actively engaging in a scientific literature group to read and understand a collegiate article about the adaptation of a particular species (literacy groups), or questioning the validity of their peers’ literary criticisms in English class (questioning). In addition to students questioning one another, you

might also see teachers inviting all students to engage in rigorous material with questions like, “What do you notice?” All kids can notice something, so all kids have an entry point. You might see teachers asking, “Why do you think that?”, “Where is your evidence?”, “Why does that procedure make sense?” to ensure students are thinking deeply about the material.

The six strategies are used across all subjects and within each grade level so that students are talking, thinking, and doing within each discipline. Students who enter the building as seventh graders, unwilling to pick up a pencil on day one of our August Academy, afraid to make a mistake or to show how little they have learned in prior classes, begin to develop confidence as thinkers. This confidence, with the help of the instructional approach and dedication of all teachers at UPCS, strengthens over the years and students begin to realize and believe that they CAN be successful in college.

To ensure that students are prepared for the rigors of a college education and equipped to handle the fact that not all college classes are interactive and supportive, changes have been made to the 11th and 12th grade years. Through data analysis, reflection, and collaboration on the part of UPCS teachers, adjustments were made to upper level courses so that they are more analogous to college courses being syllabus-driven, lecture-style, and requiring large amounts of reading that is not collaborative or scaffolded. Ninety-eight percent of students also take a college course before they graduate high school. These efforts have proven successful as evidenced by our college acceptances. To preserve this success and continue to make gains, UPCS is seeking autonomy over instruction and curriculum.

UPCS has become a national model for educational reform initiatives through partnership with Jobs for the Future. UPCS hopes to continue to provide professional development for other educators in this way as an Innovation School. The Rounds process (see Appendix D) and other collaboration that occurs amongst the staff and principal are ways in which instructional practices are observed, shared, and enriched. Further ways of assessing the effectiveness of instructional practices are and will continue to be analysis of MAP, MCAS, SAT, and alumni survey data, as well as principal walk-throughs and principal evaluations based on teacher goal-setting.

Leadership

University Park Campus School has a bold mission—to engage students from the Main South neighborhood in an all-honors curriculum and prepare them for college, regardless of the skills with which they enter the school in seventh grade. We believe that all students can be productive members of society, that all students can engage in a rigorous curriculum if properly supported, and that all

students can have a voice and use it to construct knowledge. The following autonomies will help us to achieve these goals.

- UPCS requests autonomy in the area of Human Resources, attracting, hiring, placing, developing, retaining, and evaluating staff independently, without regard to seniority within Worcester Public Schools.
- UPCS requests autonomy in the area of Instructional systems, including issues related to teaching and learning, school management, instructional leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development materials and support.
- UPCS requests budgeting autonomy in relation to staff, faculty, instructional materials, and grants management. University Park will adhere to the Worcester Public Schools policies and practices in regard to transportation, nutrition, and facilities management.
- The WPS office of Research and Accountability will continue to provide support regarding data collection, application, and action planning related to continuous improvement toward outstanding results for all students.

Deepen the Implementation of the School-Wide Instructional Focus

First and foremost, we believe that our focus, for students to become college ready by reading, writing, and thinking critically and analytically, is paramount to our success. The leadership of the building will work to ensure that students and teachers engage in this focus daily. Weekly meetings held during common planning time will center on best practices across the curriculum, as well as developing intervention plans for students who need additional support. Flexible class scheduling will ensure that teachers have time to meet in grade-level teams as well as in departments to develop rubrics, align curriculum maps, and develop appropriate systems of differentiated instruction to engage their heterogeneous-level classes. The administration will be a strong voice, but will share leadership with teachers in terms of curriculum innovation and student support services.

Develop Professional Collaboration Teams to Improve Teaching and Learning

University Park will thrive on a system that routinely shares best practices and analyzes data. At weekly meetings, held on Wednesday mornings, the leadership (Principal and Instructional Leadership Team) will set an agenda that focuses on a particular best practice, or that provides data from MCAS, MAP, SAT, Interim or Quarter grades, etc. Faculty will share best practices and examine data as a whole group,

as well as in established grade-level and department teams, looking for trends and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Teams will make appropriate plans based on the data and established best practices. In addition, teachers will serve on committees for NEASC accreditation and to focus on particular topics such as technology or mission and vision.

Learn and Use Effective Research-Based Teaching Practices

University Park uses a common instructional framework consisting of six instructional strategies to differentiate instruction: collaborative group work, writing to learn, scaffolding, questioning, classroom talk, and literacy groups. Teachers will implement these strategies across the curriculum and will discuss progress at weekly common planning time meetings and during Rounds. In addition, faculty will implement effective research-based practices as identified in the Marshall Memo, alumni data and through work with Clark University curriculum teams at the Hiatt Center for Urban Education.

Implement a Targeted Professional Development Plan

University Park's Professional Development Plan focuses intensely on having high expectations of students and providing the necessary supports for students to succeed in meeting those expectations. Staff continually work to differentiate instruction to offer opportunities for all students to access the curriculum. The Rounds process of professional development will be used to share best practices and offer insight to teachers about how successful pedagogy in one curricular area may be applicable in another. School leadership will create opportunities for teachers to host and attend Rounds. In addition, UPCS faculty will participate in and lead workshops for Clark University Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) students and teachers from across the country through work with Jobs for the Future. The Instructional Leadership teams will also continue its work with Focus on Results.

Realign Resources (People, Time, Energy, and Money) to Support the Instructional Focus

UPCS aligns resources (people, time, energy, money) to support the instructional focus. With the exception of the alumni coordinator, all members of the faculty are classroom teachers. Flexible scheduling allows common planning time to occur weekly and block scheduling to benefit the seventh and tenth grades in Math and English. Time is arranged for teams and departments to meet, and the faculty has made a concerted effort to complete all four categories of ELL training. We strive not just to get students into college but to succeed once they are there. Students are able to take courses at Clark University, and increasingly at Holy Cross and Worcester State. Transitional summer academies for 7th graders and 9th graders is essential for acclimating students to the middle school and high school

respectively. Resources will be directed toward an after-school homework center, College Awareness Day and costs associated with obtaining college credits. Budgetary autonomy will ensure that such valuable programs benefit our students directly.

Engage Families and the Community in Supporting the Instructional Focus

UPCS strives to engage families in supporting our instructional focus. Parents of incoming seventh graders are introduced to the school, its focus, and its college promise. Expectations are very clear. Bi-monthly progress reports are sent home for these seventh graders to keep parents fully informed. As first quarter ends, Know Your School night provides families of all students an opportunity to meet teachers and discuss students' progress. In addition, the Parent Council strives to communicate with the entire body of parents, providing translated materials when necessary. When students need additional support, families are welcome anytime. The principal maintains an "open-door" policy and provides coverage for any teacher to meet with parents. Wednesday schedules also provide opportunities for parents to meet with all of their child's teachers as needed.

Deepen the Internal Accountability System

UPCS's SMARTe goals are specific, measureable, attainable, relevant to our focus, timely, and expected of everyone. We expect all students to show growth by internal and external measures and aspire to achieve 85% proficiency in math, and 90% proficiency in English as determined by MCAS. This has proved achievable at the high school level, though has proved more difficult in the middle school. Internal measures such as MAP tests, grading data, student performance on 8th, 10th, and 12th grade Gateway projects, and school-wide expectations rubrics will inform faculty about the progress of individual students. The principal and ILT will make this data available at the beginning of the year and at weekly common planning time. Grade-level teams and departments will devise plans to address deficiencies and follow up through future common planning time meetings and the Rounds process.

Leadership Focuses on Instruction

Despite the many challenges that come with administration, the principal of UPCS is dedicated to spending up to 50% of the instructional day in classes. No program or schedule can make a difference without dedicated teachers that know instruction. The principal will spend time in three different classes per day, engage with the teacher, students, and material and provide constructive feedback at an appropriate time. The principal will be the instructional leader of the building, participating in team

meetings, and presenting best practices. Adding an assistant principal would enable the principal to truly commit the necessary time and resources to being a consistent presence in classrooms.

Stakeholders

The key stakeholders at University Park Campus School are the students, parents, teachers, administration, the Main South community, and Clark University. Curricular autonomy will be in the hands of the teachers with oversight by administration. The faculty will align best practices to the state frameworks/common core standards. The University Park faculty is a reflective, highly-qualified force that meets frequently to assess, reassess, and decide upon changes. While matters relating to budgetary and staffing autonomy will ultimately be decided by administration, teachers will have a very strong voice in any changes that are made, as these decisions will have a direct impact on teaching and learning.

The Student Council will make key decisions around the UPCS Honor Code, events such as prom and pep rallies, as well as fundraising ventures. The Parent Council will make decisions and organize events for fundraising and community building. They will also offer help and raise concerns around curriculum, assessment, instruction, and college readiness. The administration of UPCS and Clark University will jointly make decisions around use of Clark facilities and course selection for UPCS students taking Clark courses.

Staffing Plan

University Park will have 25 professional staff including one principal and one assistant principal. There will be two custodians, two administrative assistants, and two members of the nutritional staff. We believe that staff members are best used when they are in direct contact with students everyday. Faculty will be dedicated to differentiating instruction and ensuring that students read, write, and think critically and analytically every day. They will foster students' belief that they all can go to college and that hard work is necessary for success.

Staffing autonomy will ensure that UPCS is able to attract and hire teachers who are dedicated to success for all students, who understand that scaffolding difficult material is essential for student success and students are most engaged when instruction is collaborative, differentiated and fun. Successful applicants will demonstrate how they will act on such a philosophy through interviews with

the administration, faculty, and students. They will have knowledge of and demonstrate effective approaches to student-centered, high quality teaching and learning.

Student Assessment

In all classes, we assess students in an ongoing fashion to determine the degree to which students are learning, understanding, and successfully applying material. These formative assessments include writing-to-learn assignments, quizzes, notebook checks, poster displays, oral presentations by individuals and small groups, and improvisational performances. These assessments are a fundamental part of our teaching practice because they require students to process material, while also allowing students and teachers to gain rapid, often instantaneous, feedback on student learning. Teachers then use this critical feedback in deciding how best to proceed: extending, abbreviating, or reshaping lessons as needed.

In addition, teachers help students use these assessments to develop their own awareness of themselves as learners. In the early grades, 7-9, teachers take a leading role helping students understand what they have learned, what they need to learn, and how to go about that learning. Teachers design class and homework activities that require students to assess and reflect upon their own learning. They explain and model revision, note-taking, and study skills. Then they provide small-group tutoring as needed and assign additional practice and extension activities targeted at the needs of individual students.

In the upper grades, 10-12, this approach is transitioned to a model that depends more on students' own motivation and decision-making. Teachers continue to structure activities and writing assignments that help students develop awareness of their learning, but increasingly, students must address their individual needs on their own, in study groups, and in tutoring sessions that they themselves request from teachers. This approach culminates with students taking at least one college class before graduation.

Our benchmark assessments include high-stakes writing assignments, unit tests, formal lab reports, Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) tests, Advanced Placement (AP) tests, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

The results of high-stakes writing assignments, unit tests, and formal lab reports are communicated to students over varying time frames, usually accompanied by individual written feedback from the teacher. In most cases, students can address disappointing results by substantially revising a paper or lab report, or by completing written test corrections. While there are consequences for student grades from each of these benchmarks, our philosophy is that during the academic year it is never too late for students to engage and to learn material. Furthermore, these monthly or bimonthly benchmark assessments are, in turn, treated as formative assessments for the larger benchmark assessments: final course exams, the MCAS, and AP Tests.

MAP scores are generated two to three times a year in math and English for grades 7-10. Students are the first to receive these scores, immediately upon completion of the test. Teachers then access these scores online and may, particularly in the case of English and math teachers, design class lessons or individual activities to address specific needs identified by MAP scores.

All MCAS, AP, PSAT, and SAT scores are communicated both through the mail from the governing institutions, and in personal conferences with our guidance and teaching staff. These personal meetings help ensure that students interpret these scores correctly and, when appropriate, create action plans to improve skills and then retake exams. In the case of PSAT's and SAT's, one of the options discussed at these meetings is enrollment in *Let's Get Ready*, an SAT prep program funded through Clark University and held after school two days a week.

Because proficient scores on the MCAS are required for graduation, we take particular care in communicating these scores and addressing areas of weakness. In addition to conferencing with students, English and math teachers in the eighth and ninth grades examine their students' scores to make certain that the curriculum they teach substantially addresses areas of weakness. At the start of the eleventh grade, those students who have not yet scored proficient carefully review with teachers their areas of weakness, and then they meet weekly to work on skills in preparation for the retest.

Professional Development and Structures for Collaboration

Teachers are encouraged to pursue a wide variety of professional development opportunities both on their own and as part of continuing initiatives by the region, the state, the district, University Park Campus School, and its community partner, Clark University. Teachers are provided the necessary coverage to enable them to attend workshops, observations, classes, and other relevant activities.

Regional Initiatives

UPCS is an active member of the New England Association of Secondary Schools. Three of our staff members have been a part of accreditation teams examining other schools. Currently, we are engaged in an exhaustive self-study in preparation for our own evaluation.

State Initiatives

All of our teachers develop and pursue Individualized Professional Development Plans designed to fulfill Massachusetts State requirements for recertification every five years. Additionally, as of December 2010, 14 out of 18 teachers have obtained master's degrees. 100% are highly qualified, as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Our teachers have also actively pursued state English Language Learner (ELL) certification. As of this winter, 11 out of 18 teachers have completed all four training categories with the goal being to have all teachers complete the four categories by the end of next year. This topic is of particular interest to University Park because 65% of our current student body speak English as a second language.

District Initiatives

We continue to participate substantially in Worcester Public Schools district-wide Focus On Results meetings. These meetings are focused on examining instructional practice at each secondary school, with the goal of reinforcing and further developing purposeful, student-centered instruction. Over the past two years, we have sent 8 different teachers, 45% of our staff, as representatives to Focus On Results meetings and observations. In the fall of 2010, we hosted a visit from a Focus On Results Instructional Leadership Team.

UPCS Initiatives

The cornerstone of professional collaboration at UPCS is our two-hour weekly Wednesday common planning time. By strategically scheduling student internships, itinerant teachers, and student teachers, every full-time teacher in the building is freed to attend these weekly meetings. In keeping with our philosophy of shared leadership, teachers, guidance personnel, and administration sit down at this time to discuss important issues and to make substantive decisions about school-wide policies, programs, and events. The staff collaborates extremely well in identifying problems, discussing possible solutions, and coming to a quick consensus around a plan of action. We are always striving for improvement in our mission to prepare all students for college, and periodic data sharing and analysis informs these

discussions in very meaningful ways. Chief among the data we examine are student test scores and the survey responses we receive from alumni about college-readiness.

Collaboration is fostered not only in full staff meetings, but also in regular grade-level team meetings and department meetings. These meetings are focused at different times on interdisciplinary planning, on vertically aligning curriculum, on scheduling and grouping, and on creating intervention or remediation plans for individual students. To further curriculum development last year, teachers were provided additional coverage to spend the day working on their own and in departments to create curriculum maps. Many teachers also attended meetings held at Clark to begin developing department rubrics.

Classrooms are very open at UPCS. Teachers are regularly in and out of each other's rooms observing, sharing, and helping. Once a year, we conduct a more formal sharing activity modeled on the medical round. It begins with each teacher volunteering to observe a colleague's class and to be observed by one or more colleagues. On the day of the round, teachers distribute rounds sheets describing their lesson goals and methods and identifying an area for the observer to focus on. Afterwards, post-rounds are conducted, in which the observers share their impressions and enter into a discussion with the observed teacher focused on student learning. Since the focus remains on the students, feedback is nonthreatening and centered on what really matters.

Clark University Initiatives

Teachers at UPCS have taken part as both presenters and participants in a number of professional development meetings and workshops held by Clark University. Some of these have been in conjunction with the district, including the Best Teaching workshops and the Mentor Teacher Luncheons, while others, such as the Summer Academy workshops, have been in conjunction with Jobs for the Future. Clark University has also sponsored a number of professional development opportunities on its own. These include workshops and Rounds attended by the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) students during the UPCS Summer Academy. Many of our teachers continue mentoring MAT students during the school year, which involves regular planning and conferencing with these students, as well as observing and giving constructive feedback. One of our middle school math teachers, Kate Shepard, also serves as an adjunct Clark professor in the Jacob Hiatt Center for Urban Education, and several of our teachers have participated in curriculum teams and co-developed/co-taught the Ways of Knowing course at Clark.

Tiered Instruction and Adequate Learning Time

Tier 1

We believe that all our students can achieve at a high level; therefore, every class at UPCS is an honors class. Teachers scaffold the material for weaker students by presenting it in small chunks and by engaging students in frequent small-group assignments. Student assessments are varied and many of them are untimed, but the content is rigorous and we are dedicated to preparing our students to pass the MCAS and ultimately move on to successful college careers. We use our students' MCAS scores as well as the information gathered in alumni surveys to align our curricula to best support these goals.

To help acculturate students to our academic and social expectations, we have developed two summer bridge programs: three-week academies for the key transition years of seventh and ninth grades. At these academies, students engage in authentic, rigorous academic inquiry. They work collaboratively, and they are taught that original thinking is not only respected but required.

The culture at UPCS is created not just by staff but also by students. This happens informally with students offering each other help and constructive criticism on a daily basis, but we also have in place some formal mentoring structures to help reinforce this dynamic. The first of these is the school-wide advisory groups, which consist of students from different grades who meet on a weekly basis. At these meetings, students discuss social and academic goals, along with common obstacles to attaining these goals. All students share strategies for overcoming these obstacles, and older students are able to provide valuable perspective on how younger students can best prepare themselves for the challenges they will face as they progress in their high school education.

In addition to advisory groups, the new seventh grade students are placed in small mentor groups with upper classmen who are members of the National Honor Society. Tenth and eleventh grade students are placed in small mentor groups with students from Clark University. This student-to-student mentoring plays a large role in providing our students with one-on-one help adjusting to high school life, understanding concepts, and acquiring strong study habits.

Tier 2

In order to ensure that all students proceed to the next stage in their own development, a substantial amount of the instruction at UPCS is differentiated. This allows for those who are struggling to spend time reinforcing core concepts, while others can proceed to more challenging problems. There are a variety of ways that this differentiation is accomplished within the classroom, including task differentiation, extension problems, test corrections, peer editing, written feedback, teacher-student conferences, and mini-lessons for small groups. Computerized MAP testing provides additional differentiated practice and assessment for English and math students.

For eleventh grade students, formal Planning Educational Path (PEP) meetings also play an important role in ensuring students understand what is required for them to pass to the next stage of their academic development. At these meetings, an individual student sits down with several of his or her teachers and the guidance counselor to discuss that student's past educational accomplishments, along with his or her goals for future post-secondary study. After the student identifies his or her goal, the teachers and guidance counselor share their insights about what is needed to achieve that goal. Together, the members of the PEP draft a practical plan for the remainder of the student's time at UPCS.

Tier 3

There are a wide number of practices undertaken to provide both remediation and enrichment for individual students at UPCS. For special education students, Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are developed by specially convened teams and then communicated by our special education teacher directly to the teachers. As needed, these students are pulled from enrichments to receive additional instruction and study support for one period each day. At our weekly Wednesday meeting and at other times throughout the week, teachers in core academic areas work closely with our special education teacher to plan accommodations and interventions for individual students. For students who may need services but have not been previously identified, teachers understand how to initiate the Student Support Process. For students who fail to achieve a score of proficient on the sophomore administration of one or more sections of the MCAS, regular tutoring sessions are often scheduled at least once a week with an individual teacher.

For those who still struggle with the material or the work habits needed to understand it, our after-school program provides valuable resources. This program includes both voluntary and compulsory attendance. Resources include teachers and tutors ranging from upper class high school students to

students from two local colleges: Clark University and The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy. Special arrangements are often made by staff to connect specific tutors with specific students.

Opportunities for gifted and talented students include participation on Math Team, which competes against other regional schools in rigorous competitions, and participation in the Drama Club, which presents quality productions of literary plays. Once students reach the eleventh and twelfth grades, they have the opportunity not only to take advanced placement courses in several subjects, but also to take college courses free of charge at one of four local colleges: Clark University, The College of the Holy Cross, Quinsigamond Community College, and Worcester State University.

Community

Students Social, Emotional and Health Needs

UPCS provides a safe school environment and uses a system that includes family and community supports for addressing the social, emotional and health needs of its students. All of the teachers and school staff invest themselves in creating a school culture that supports learning by ensuring that students feel safe and able to discuss any issues they may be having in and/or out of school. Teachers and staff develop relationships with students that clearly communicate the importance of students' intellectual, social and emotional growth. Students know they are valued and respected by their teachers and students value and respect each other.

When teachers have concerns about students, they may implement the Student Support Process (SSP). This process includes a series of steps to determine the issues that a student may be facing and solutions to those issues. Initially, the process involves the principal, the Adjustment Counselor, the team of teachers working with the student and the student's parents and/or guardians. Depending on the student's issues, the process may also include special education specialists and mental and physical health professionals. The goal of the process is to ensure that struggling students get their needs met in a timely and effective manner with minimal disruption of their education.

UPCS has begun to implement an Advisory process where students meet with a teacher advisor once a week. As part of the Innovation process, the faculty and students at UPCS will continue to develop and implement Advisory as one of the components of the school that helps meet the social, emotional and health needs of students. UPCS currently offers students a range of afterschool clubs and activities, like Drama Club, Math Team and cross country. All of these clubs and activities contribute to students' health and well being. Finally, students participate in whole-school activities like team-building days,

Coffee Houses and Poetry Potlucks to support community enrichment and the acquisition of social skills. Budgetary autonomy would allow UPCS to continue to provide students with these supports for their social, emotional and health needs.

Family-School Engagement

UPCS maintains strong working relationships with families and community partners and providers to support the academic progress of students as well as their social and emotional well-being. The Parent Council, a group of committed parents, meets monthly to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community. UPCS and the Parent Council will continue to work together to strengthen the level of family-school engagement. The school also actively communicates with families about their students and their academic, social and civic progress as they strive to meet the expectations of the school and fulfill its mission and vision of preparing all students for college and beyond. UPCS hosts activities like College Awareness Day and the Coffee House to keep parents engaged with the school community and their students' education. UPCS has also begun to develop Gateway projects that will assess students' progress toward meeting the expectations of the school. These expectations include social and civic measures (see Appendix A) that require students to connect with and contribute to their communities. UPCS will invite parents and community members to participate in these projects. As part of being innovative, UPCS faculty will continue to develop these Gateway projects in collaboration with students, parents and community members.

UPCS sustains a community partnership with Clark University. Clark supports the academic and social progress of UPCS students in multiple ways. UPCS students take courses at Clark as high school students to gain experience as college students and college credits. UPCS students also have access to Clark facilities like the gym and library. In addition, Clark offers students free tuition if they apply and are accepted to the university. The partnership with Clark allows UPCS to consistently deliver on its promise to prepare all students for college by helping to build a college-preparatory foundation for students starting in the seventh grade. Students at UPCS literally see Clark in their backyard, work with Master's students in their classrooms and take classes with Clark professors. They feel like they belong on the Clark campus and are members of the university community. All of these practices create a school culture that convinces all students that they will go to college and succeed there because college has been a part of their education since they began UPCS as middle school students. UPCS will continue to

nurture its relationship with Clark and continue to develop partnerships with other Worcester colleges and universities, such as Holy Cross and Worcester State University.

(xi) A preliminary description of the process that will be used to involve appropriate stakeholders in the development of the innovation plan:

Once our prospectus is approved, the leadership team will work to create our Innovation Committee and Plan. We already have very active and vibrant parent and site councils, key community partners (Clark, feeder schools, community organizations), as well as a solid and cohesive faculty and staff from which to choose the prescribed candidates for the committee. We have firm commitments from key stakeholders to play a role in helping us fine-tune our Innovation Plan to ensure the best possible outcome and to take University Park Campus School to the next level of success.

(xii) A proposed timetable for the development and establishment of the proposed school:

December 15 th	Submit Prospectus to District Office
January 15 th	Submit Innovation Planning Grant Application to DESE
January 18 th	Create Planning Committee (as prescribed by state legislation)
Jan 15-February 28	Complete planning process (Innovation Committee)
March 1 st	Submit completed Innovation Plan
March 7 th	Vote by faculty on Conversion School Plan
March 31 st	Submit all documents (plan and record of vote) to School Committee
April 7 th	Attend hearing with School Committee
April 27 th	School Committee vote on adoption
June 30 th	Submit Implementation Grant Application to DESE